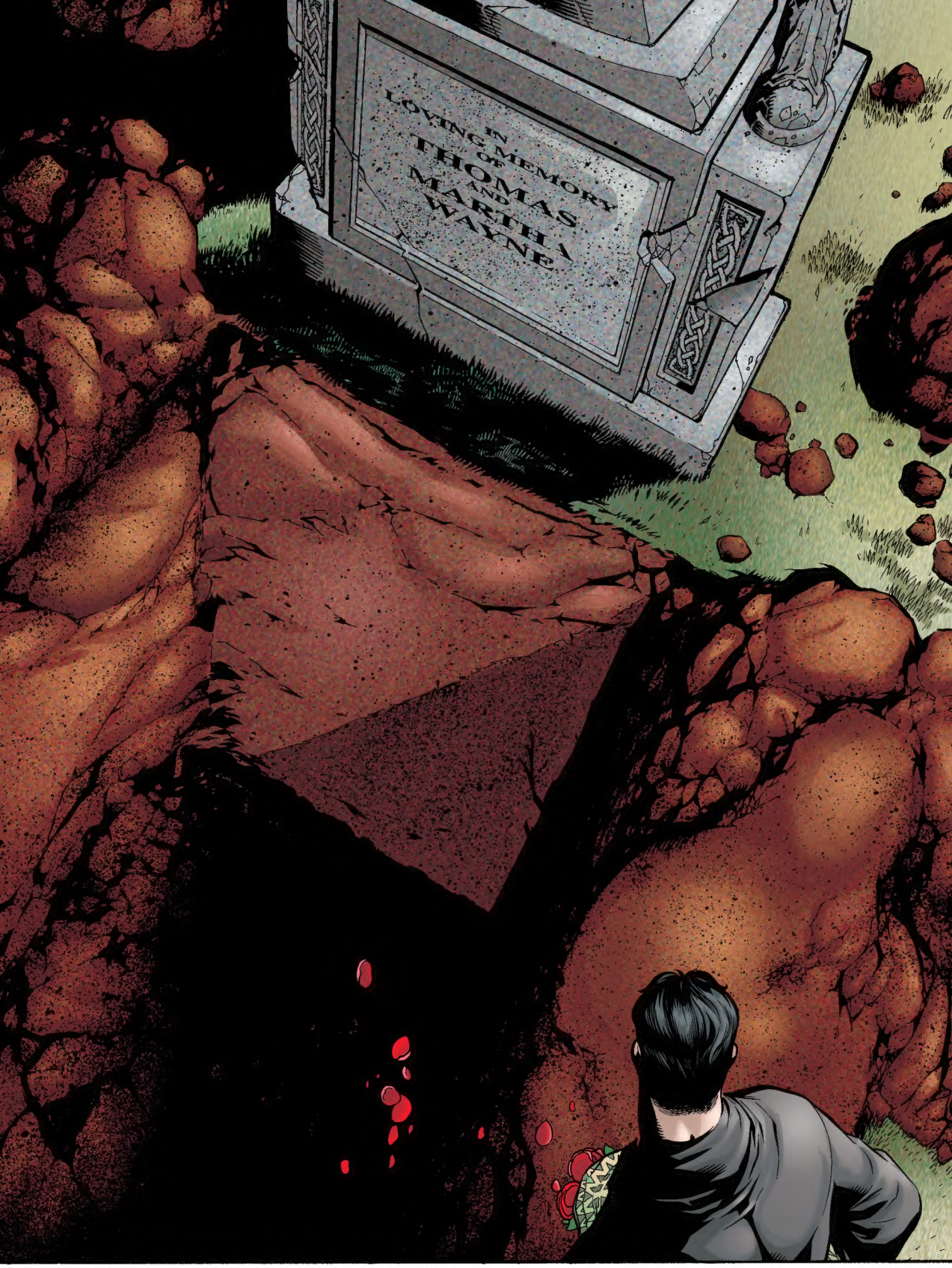
A DANGEROUS NEW DIRECTION!
JLA
43
JUL 00
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
TOWER OF BABEL
PART ONE OF FOUR
dccomics.com
WAID • PORTER • GERACI

EVOLUTION and ETHICS
HUXLEY
YOU WHAT?
ASIA.
THE HIMALAYAN RETREAT OF RA'S AL GHUL.
YOU FED HIM WHAT?
CH-CHOCOLATE, SIR. I DIDN'T TH-THINK IT WOULD HUH-HURT HIM... I SWEAR...
I SEE. IT WAS YOUR JOB TO LOOK AFTER HIM, AND YOU WERE JUST "BEING KIND."
EVEN THOUGH IT WAS CRITICAL HIS SPECIAL DIET BE MAINTAINED DUE TO HIS FRAGILITY.
AND NOW THAT HE IS DEAD, HIS MATE-TO-BE... FUTURE MOTHER OF HIS CHILDREN... IS THE LAST OF HER LINE. NOW THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER LIKE EITHER OF THEM.
UBU... SHOW HIM THE SAME "KINDNESS."
NO! MY LORD, PLEASE! IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!
SURELY YOU CAN'T KILL ME OVER THIS! I DIDN'T MEAN TO--
I'M SORRY! I'M SORRYYY--

WHEN WILL THEY LEARN, TALIA?
THANKS TO HUMAN STUPIDITY, THE JAVAN TIGER IS NOW EXTINCT.
HOW LONG BEFORE THE SAME IS SAID OF THE PALOS VERDE BUTTERFLY? THE BLACK RHINO OR THE SAIGO ANTELOPE?
YOU HAVE DONE MUCH FOR THEM, FATHER. HOW MANY NATURAL SPECIES THRIVE DUE TO YOUR EFFORTS?
THEY DO NOT "THRIVE" IN CONSERVATORIES, TALIA. THE ONLY THING THAT THRIVES OUTSIDE THESE WALLS ARE THE SIX BILLION SHORTSIGHTED PARASITES WHO CONTINUE TO RAVAGE OUR PLANET'S NATURAL RESOURCES.
ON ITS OWN, HUMANITY IS A DESTRUCTIVE FORCE. IT NEEDS A MASTER.
THE SCHEMATICS, PLEASE.
EXCELLENT. IN THE PAST, I HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN MY EFFORTS TO PARE THE HUMAN RACE TO A MANAGEABLE SIZE.
BEGINNING TOMORROW, HOWEVER... MANKIND WILL BEGIN THINNING ITSELF.
AND YOU EXPECT NO INTERFERENCE?
MY LEAGUE HAS ITS INSTRUCTIONS. PROVIDED YOU FOLLOW THEM TO THE LETTER, OUR MOST TROUBLESOME ADVERSARIES WILL BE NULLIFIED... IN SOME MOST IMAGINATIVE WAYS.
AND AS FOR THE MOST PERSISTENT THORN IN OUR SIDE, THE DETECTIVE... WELL...

"...DISTRACTING HIM WAS SO OBVIOUS A MATTER, I CANNOT BELIEVE I NEVER THOUGHT OF IT BEFORE."



PART 1 TOWER OF BABEL

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

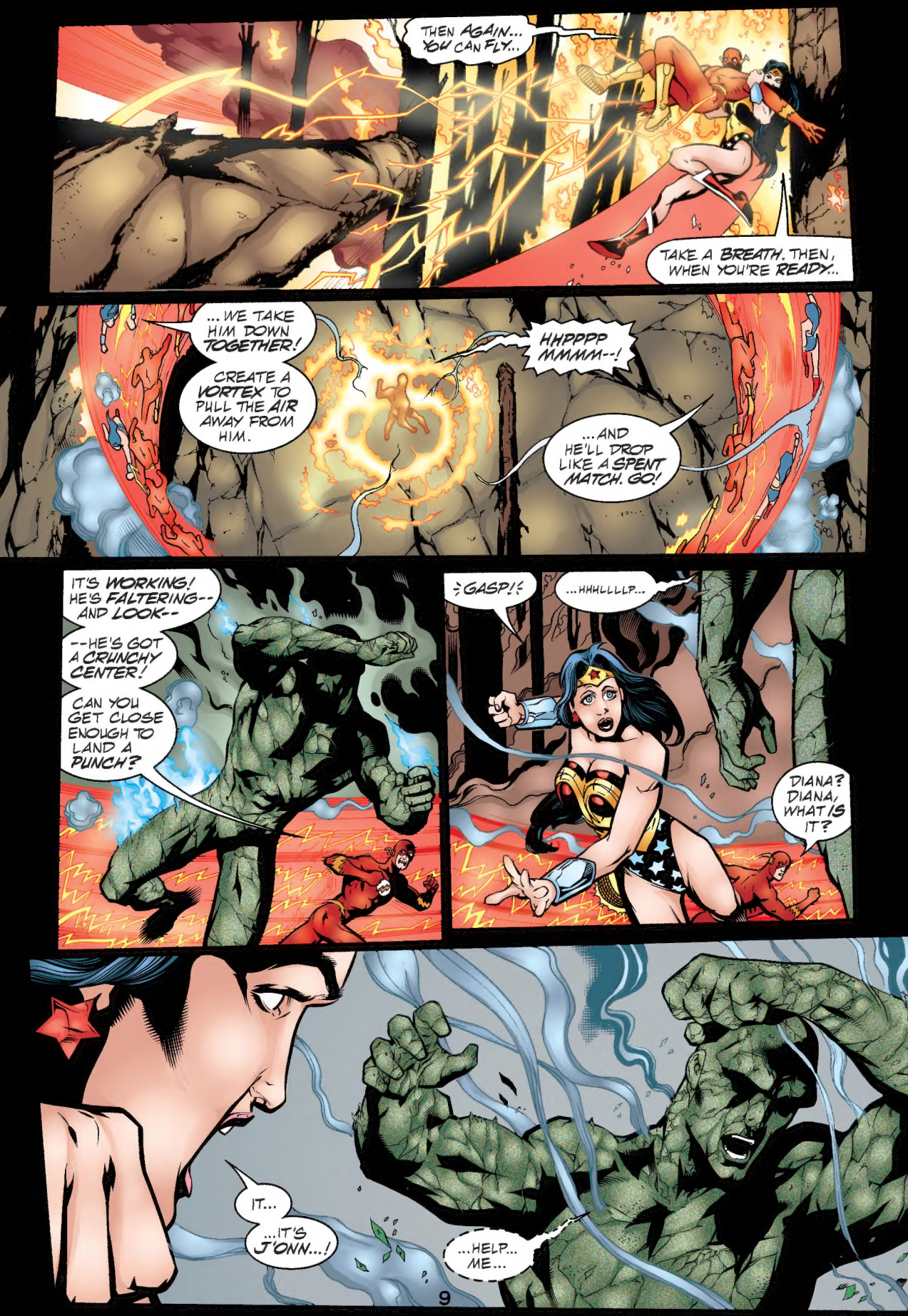
MARK WAID	HOWARD PORTER	DREW GERACI	KEN LOPEZ	PAT GARRAHY	HEROIC AGE	TONY BEDARD	DAN RASPLER
STORY	PENCILLER	INKER	LETTERER	COLORIST	SEPARATIONS	ASSOC. EDITOR	EDITOR

"WITH THE BATMAN... OCCUPIED.. OUR FIRST PRIORITY IS THE MARTIAN TELEPATH.
"YOU HAVE THE TOOLS WITH WHICH TO TRACE HIM."
Target LOCKED
Approaching 72km/sec
"USE THEM."
THOOM
GREAT H'RONMEER--!
THAT WAS NO MILITARY SHELL. IT CARRIED NO EXPLOSIVES-- MERELY A FINE METAL DUST THAT WON'T SEEM TO DISSIPATE.
WHAT'S IN IT THAT'S SO TENACIOUS..?

GERMANY'S BLACK FOREST HAS BEEN BURNING FOR HOURS WITH NO SIGN OF STOPPING.
WITH THE RIVER RHINE MORE THAN EIGHTEEN MILES AWAY, THERE'S NO WATER TO QUENCH THE BLAZE BEFORE IT REACHES STUTTGART.
TO CONTAIN AN INFERNO THIS MASSIVE, YOU'D NEED TO CREATE A FIREBREAK TOO LARGE TO IMAGINE...
...FOR ANYONE OTHER THAN FLASH AND WONDER WOMAN.
GLAD YOU COULD KEEP UP.
I DO MY PART. WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE STARTED THIS?

NO ONE CAN TELL US. J'ONN WAS THE NEAREST LEAGUER WHEN THE BLAZE BROKE OUT, BUT WE LOST HIS SIGNAL OVER SWITZERLAND FOR SOME REASON.
JUST AS WELL HE'S NOT HERE. YOU KNOW WHAT FIRE DOES TO THE POOR GUY. TOUGH AS YOU, BUT WAVE A MATCH AT HIM...
...OR... SOMETHING BIGGER...
YOU WERE ASKING WHO DISSED SMOKEY THE BEAR? I THINK I'VE SPOTTED A CLUE.
HHHLLLMMM!
YOU MEAN HIM?
SARCASM IS SO LOST ON YOU. YES, HIM. C'MON... LET'S PUT HIM OUT.
RACE YOU.
YOU'RE ON.
I WARN YOU, THE GODS GRANTED ME THE SPEED OF MERCURY.
OH, I'M SORRY. I THOUGHT YOU WERE FAST.

THEN AGAIN...
...IT'S NOT ALWAYS ABOUT SPEED.
HHMMEEE!
?
FLASH, LOOK OUT!
THWAM
FLASH!

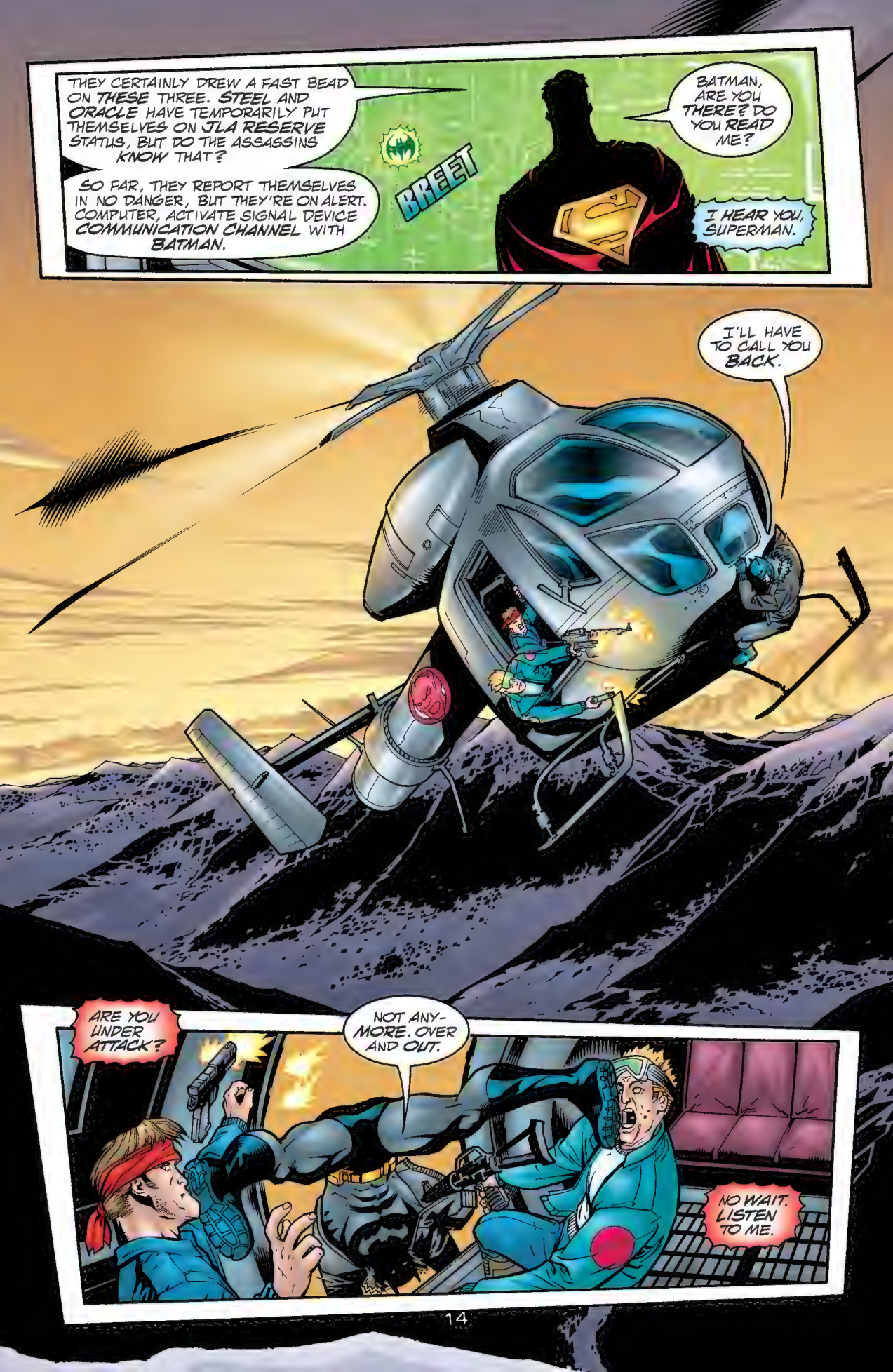

THEN AGAIN... YOU CAN FLY...
TAKE A BREATH. THEN, WHEN YOU'RE READY..
...WE TAKE HIM DOWN TOGETHER!
CREATE A VORTEX TO PULL THE AIR AWAY FROM HIM.
HHPPPP MMMM--!
...AND HE'LL DROP LIKE A SPENT MATCH. GO!
IT'S WORKING! HE'S FALTERING-- AND LOOK--
--HE'S GOT A CRUNCHY CENTER!
CAN YOU GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO LAND A PUNCH?
÷GASP!÷
...HHHLLLLP...
DIANA? DIANA, WHAT IS IT?
IT...
...IT'S J'ONN...!
...HELP... ME...

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
--AND WE WILL NOT HESITATE TO DECLARE A MILITARY ACTION SHOULD THE TURKS CONTINUE TO DEFY US!
DEFY YOU? DO YOU THINK WE'LL STAND IDLY BY WHILE THE RHAPASTANIANS THREATEN OUR BORDERS? IF IT'S A WAR YOU WANT--
GENTLEMEN! GENTLEMEN, PLEASE! THE GOOD AND PEACEFUL PEOPLE OF ATLANTIS BEG YOU BOTH TO END THIS CONFLICT!
AS A KINGDOM WITH ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH BOTH YOUR COUNTRIES, WE HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO MEDIATE. IN THE WORDS OF OUR KING--
WHO IS NOT HERE, LORD KRANO--DESPITE YOUR CLAIMS THAT HE HAS PRIORITIZED THIS MATTER!
FOR ONCE, THE RHAPASTAN MINISTER SPEAKS WISELY. WHERE IS YOUR PRECIOUS "AQUAMAN"?
KRAASH
ONE SIDE!
HOT SOUP!
COMIN' THRU!
--TRAMPOLINE--!
WAS THAT A REQUEST? SINCE WHEN DO YOU TAKE ME THAT SERIOUSLY?
YOU'RE A TEAMMATE, PLASTIC MAN. I TRUST YOU.
I DON'T LIKE YOU, BUT I TRUST YOU.

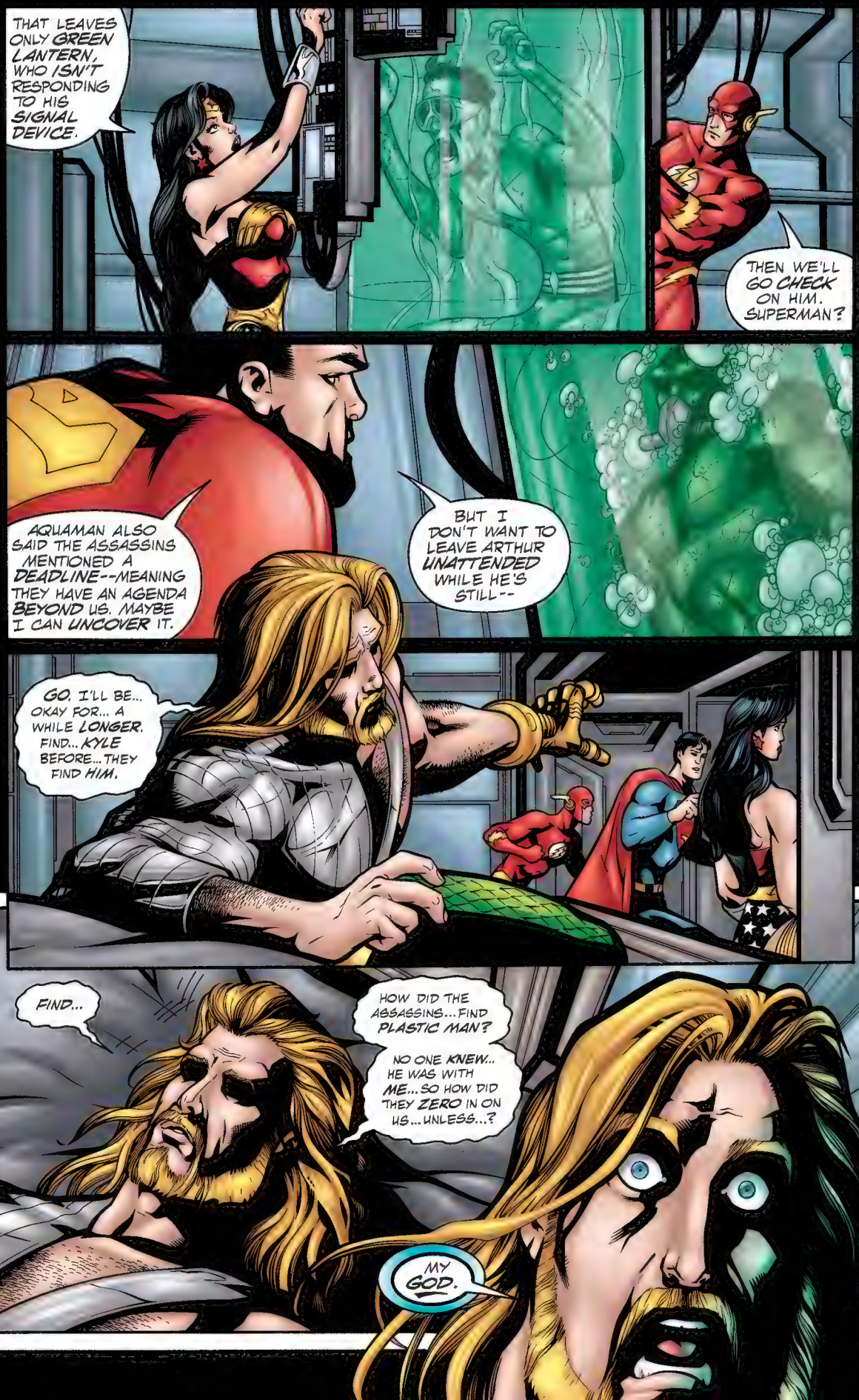
MY LORD, WHO--?
ASSASSINS. THEY FOUND ME OUTSIDE. KRANO, EVACUATE THE ROOM! NOW!
SURE, CAP'N HOOK! I'LL HELP WITH SECURITY!"
AFTER ALL, WHAT COULD GO WRONG?
NOTE TO SELF:
IN THE JLA, THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A RHETORICAL QUESTION...
VREEEE
IS THAT ONE STILL TALKING?
NOT FOR LONG.
--=!-
NO! IF THAT HITS HIM IN BRITTLE FORM--
=GHUUH!=
WHUMPH

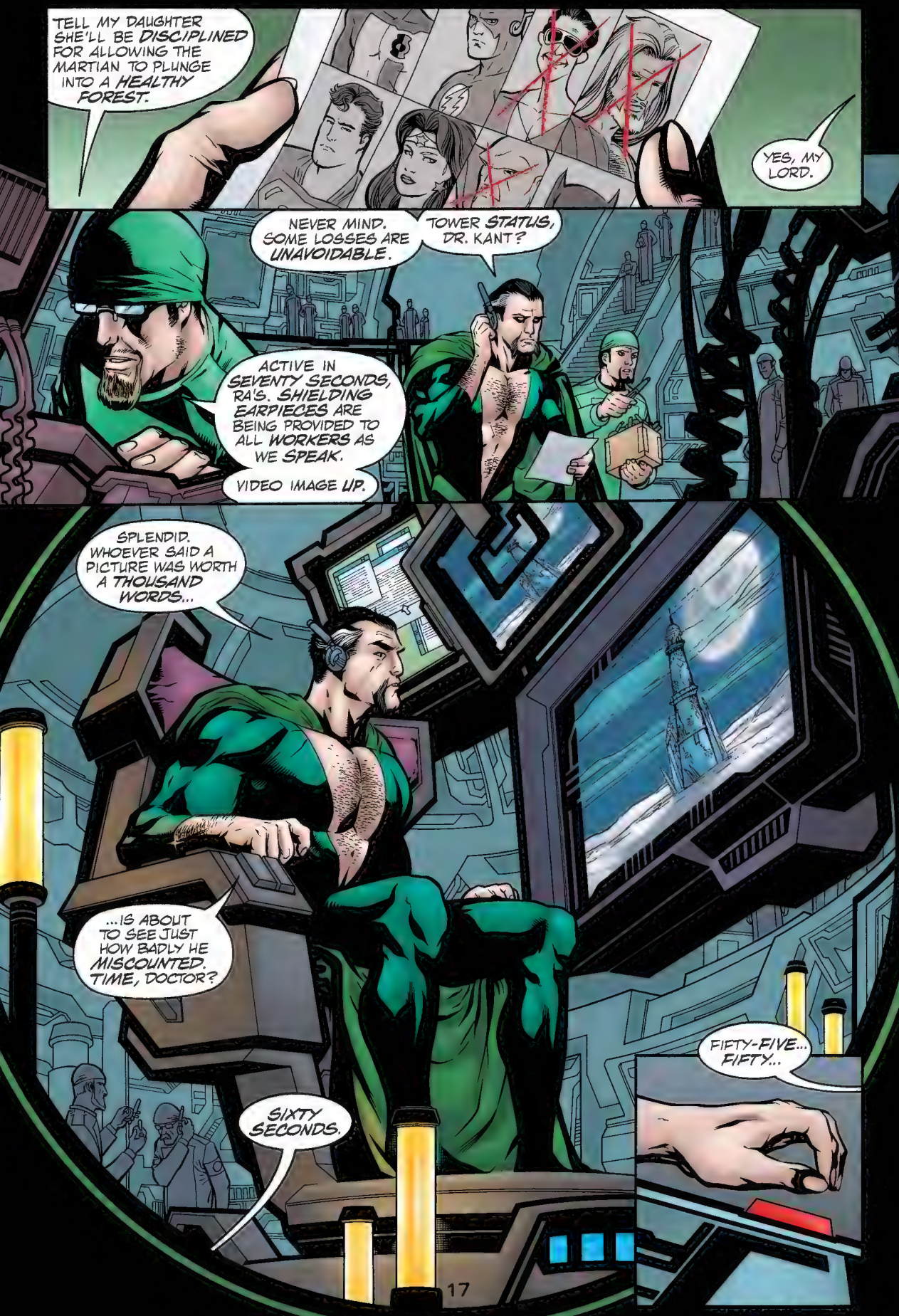
KOFF KOFF
JLA TARGET TWO GASSED, TARGET THREE FLASH-FROZEN. LET'S GO. WE'RE ON A DEADLINE...
...AND OUR WORK HERE IS DONE.
KSSSH
...CALL SECURITY...
SIR! SIR, ARE YOU HURT?
ALLAH...!
GET BACK! GIVE THIS MAN SOME AIR!
AIR? PLEASE! GIVE HIM WATER! HURRY!
WATER...?
NO.
NOOOOOO!
GET IT AWAY FROM ME!

JLA WATCHTOWER
IT'S HIS SKIN.
IT'S BEEN CHANGED-- BONDED WITH NANITES ENGINEERED TO TRANSMUTE TRACE ELEMENTS INTO MAGNESIUM--
--AN ELEMENT THAT BURSTS INTO FLAME IN THE OPEN AIR.
J'ONN'S BECOME A LIVING TORCH.
YEAH, WELL, NUTTY PUTTY HERE ISN'T MUCH BETTER OFF.
DON'T CALL HIM THAT. SHOW RESPECT.
I'M SORRY. I'M JUST TRYING NOT TO THROW UP WATCHING MYSELF DO THIS. ASSUMING I CAN EVEN GET ALL THE PIECES IN PLACE... THEN WHAT? WE VULCANIZE HIM?
THAT'S NOT... FUNNYY...
I KNOW.
AND TAKE IT EASY. WE'VE GOT THE HUMIDITY IN HERE CRANKED UP TO "RAIN FOREST," BUT THAT'S ALL WE CAN DO FOR YOU UNTIL THAT FEAR TOXIN WEARS OFF...
...WHICH HAD BETTER HAPPEN SOON. ARTHUR'S DEHYDRATING BY THE SECOND.
HE CAN'T BRING HIMSELF TO GO ANYWHERE NEAR WATER, AND WITHOUT IT... HE'LL DIE.
HE SAID THE ASSASSINS REFERRED TO THEM AS "JLA TARGETS"-- MEANING THAT WE'RE ALL IN THEIR SIGHTS.


THEY CERTAINLY DREW A FAST BEAD ON THESE THREE. STEEL AND ORACLE HAVE TEMPORARILY PUT THEMSELVES ON JLA RESERVE STATUS, BUT DO THE ASSASSINS KNOW THAT?
SO FAR, THEY REPORT THEMSELVES IN NO DANGER, BUT THEY'RE ON ALERT. COMPUTER, ACTIVATE SIGNAL DEVICE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL WITH BATMAN.
BREET
BATMAN, ARE YOU THERE? DO YOU READ ME?
I HEAR YOU, SUPERMAN.
I'LL HAVE TO CALL YOU BACK.
ARE YOU UNDER ATTACK?
NOT ANY-MORE. OVER AND OUT.
NO WAIT. LISTEN TO ME.

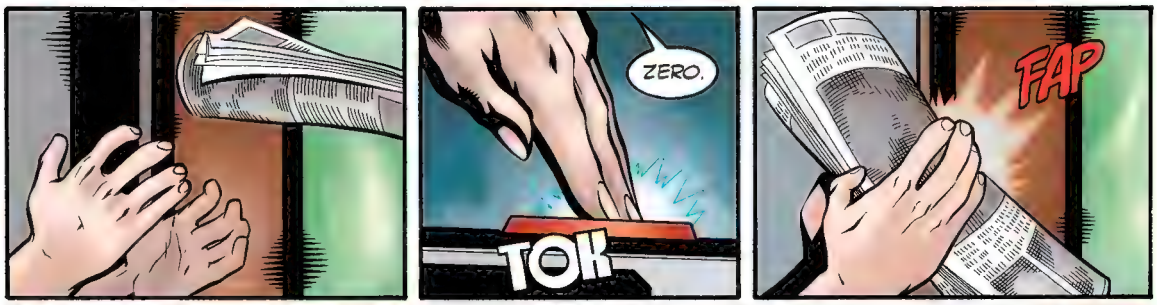
THE LEAGUE'S BEING HUNTED BY PERSONS UNKNOWN.
IS ANYONE DEAD?
NOT YET, BUT--
IS THIS SOMETHING YOU CAN'T HANDLE WITHOUT ME?
AGAIN, NOT YET--
THEN CLOSING CHANNEL.
KLIK
CARGO MANIFEST
GOTHAM CARGO:
Two matching cartons. Picked up KARACHI, PAKISTAN
0715 hours
Delivered to NEW DELHI, INDIA
1005 hours.
BATMAN!
...
THAT'S NOT LIKE HIM.
HOW CAN YOU TELL?
BECAUSE WE'RE FRIENDS, WALLY. WHATEVER HE'S INVESTIGATING CLEARLY HAS HIS FULL ATTENTION FOR THE MOMENT.


THAT LEAVES ONLY GREEN LANTERN, WHO ISN'T RESPONDING TO HIS SIGNAL DEVICE.
THEN WE'LL GO CHECK ON HIM. SUPERMAN?
AQUAMAN ALSO SAID THE ASSASSINS MENTIONED A DEADLINE--MEANING THEY HAVE AN AGENDA BEYOND US. MAYBE I CAN UNCOVER IT.
BUT I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE ARTHUR UNATTENDED WHILE HE'S STILL--
GO. I'LL BE... OKAY FOR... A WHILE LONGER. FIND... KYLE BEFORE... THEY FIND HIM.
FIND...
HOW DID THE ASSASSINS... FIND PLASTIC MAN?
NO ONE KNEW... HE WAS WITH ME... SO HOW DID THEY ZERO IN ON US... UNLESS...?
MY GOD.


TELL MY DAUGHTER SHE'LL BE DISCIPLINED FOR ALLOWING THE MARTIAN TO PLUNGE INTO A HEALTHY FOREST.
YES, MY LORD.
NEVER MIND. SOME LOSSES ARE UNAVOIDABLE.
TOWER STATUS, DR. KANT?
ACTIVE IN SEVENTY SECONDS, RA'S. SHIELDING EARPIECES ARE BEING PROVIDED TO ALL WORKERS AS WE SPEAK.
VIDEO IMAGE UP.
SPLENDID. WHOEVER SAID A PICTURE WAS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS...
...IS ABOUT TO SEE JUST HOW BADLY HE MISCOUNTED. TIME, DOCTOR?
SIXTY SECONDS.
FIFTY-FIVE... FIFTY...

IN SITUATIONS LIKE THESE I'M REMINDED WHY I BECAME A REPORTER.
NO MATTER WHAT TROUBLE MIGHT STRIKE, I'M ALWAYS FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT IT.
IN MY NEW POSITION AS A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT, I'M NO LONGER AS IMMERSED IN THE THICK OF NEWS AS IT HAPPENS--
SUPPLIES
KID! GET THIS TO REWRITE!
CAN I QUOTE YOU, SENATOR?
HOW MUCH OF THE BLACK FOREST, HERR FREITAG?
--NEED THE FILE ON "LUCKY" PASTIANI--!
--BUT THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME.
MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING ON THE BROWSER WALL...
SALE!
YOU WANT IT WHEN?
HAVE A NICE DAY!
DON'T FORGET FRIDAY!
JIM X-742
KENT! AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE IN MADRID?
IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR LOIS, SHE'S AT THE U.N. COVERING THE TURK-RHAPASTAN TALKS.
I FIGURED. PERRY, WHAT'S BREAKING BIG TODAY?

PERRY WHITE
WHY AREN'T YOU TELLING ME?
I'M BUSY, KENT. YOU WANT NEWS, READ THE PAPER. AND SAVE ME THE SPORTS.


ZERO.
TOK
FAP

DYO RTNSBD
Afhgksdhghsd Hgehrrrh Ghhw
Afhgksdhghsd Hgehrrrh Ghhw

CHIEF...
...IS THIS A JOKE...?

GREAT CAESAR'S GHOST! THIS IS... THIS IS GIBBERISH! IF THIS IS SOMEONE'S IDEA OF A GAG--!
MARCY! MARCY, GET ME THE PRESS MANAGER! NOW!
WHOA! WHAT THE HELL--!
I MUST BE SEEIN' THINGS!
SCREEN'S ALL MESSED UP.
TECH! WE NEED THE COMPUTER TECH--!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY TERMINAL?
BABBLE.
IT'S ALL BABBLE...!

I THOUGHT YOU REMEMBERED KYLE'S APARTMENT NUMBER.
XH
I DO. I DON'T REMEMBER THE NUMBERS BEING IN GREEK.
NO OFFENSE.
DURJKFWQKXF
THIS ISN'T JUST ANOTHER LANGUAGE, WALLY. SOMETHING'S WRONG--
HERE IT IS, KYLE?
CGUYM
NOK NOK
QX
NO ANSWER, BUT I'D SWEAR I HEAR MOVEMENT INSIDE. I HATE TO DO THIS, BUT SINCE I'M NOT THE ONE WITH X-RAY VISION...
...I OWE KYLE FOR ONE DOOR LOCK.
SHRAAAK
THERE HE IS! MAN, ARE YOU OKAY?
WALLY?

WALLY, IS THAT YOU...?
CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE!

" [A] comic legend."
– ROLLING STONE

GRANT MORRISON

"[Grant Morrison is] comics's high shaman."
– WASHINGTON POST

"[Grant Morrison] is probably my favorite writer. That guy has more ideas in his pinky than most people do in a lifetime."
– GERARD WAY
from MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE

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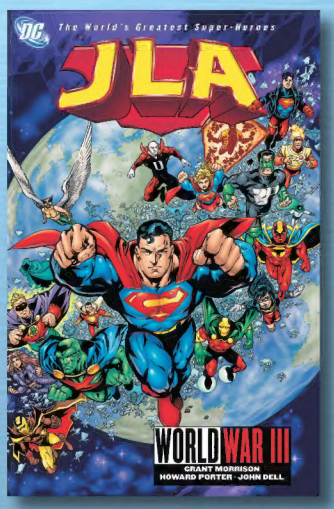

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